

AMERICAN GI FORUM OF THE U.S.

Veterans Family Organization



Congressman Henry B. Gonzales
116 Cannon House Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C.
20515

30 OCTOBER 1969

Congressman Gonzales,

I was appalled and perplexed by our most recent tirades and how indiscreetly you went on a rampage by implicating the Mother of one of our City Councilmen in your own personal feuds. Your action lacks prudence, maturity and is grossly juvenile. You have betrayed the confidence and sacred trust given to you by your many constituents.

For the past three years I have observed your radical and volatile changes from so-called social liberal to convenient conservative. Certainly you do not fit the description given to you in 1958 by Hart Stilwell "Texas Rebel With A Cause". You purport to represent a new type of leadership for all Americans, one which seeks justice, equality, slum and poverty clearance and reform generally. You are cognizant of the fact that in our city and in our jobs, flagrant abuses and miscarriage of justice are still practiced, that the vestiges of racial discrimination still prevail on us, yet you're the first to deny this.

Congressman - I call your attention to the following episodes where you have turned your back on the American of Mexican and Spanish parentage and conveniently endorsed the "Establishment" composed of the silk stocking renegades, social ultra-conservatives and hypocrites who grovel and pander to the passions of the prejudist elite and powerful.

Where were you when the Mexican American migrant farm workers living in slavery and infra-human conditions marched with dignity and pride from the slave farms in south Texas through San Antonio? Why did you not confront and condemn the actions of the then Governor of Texas and big game John Connally and his stooges Barnes and Carr, et al, for dereliction of their official duties by refusing to listen to the plight of American Citizens?

Where are you when the Texas Gestapo Agency (Texas relics), commonly known as the Texas Rangers harass and brutally beat the Mexican American? These merchants of hate and brutality then wave the American flag after their dastardly acts and say they are only good Americans doing their job for the Governor of Texas. How ironic that these so called "patriotic rangers" have ever served our Country in the uniform of a United States Soldier.

Why was the educational school system of the Edgewood School District in sub-standard condition for so many years, and who helped to perpetuate this second-class educational system on our Mexican-American children? The stigma of inferior and sub-standard education, the history of paternalism, coercion, fraud, patronage, nepotism, graft and discrimination has been the trade mark of this school district from its inception. Cognizant of this situation and of those responsible for perpetuating this corruption - you gave tacit acquiescence. Fortunately, the Edgewood School District now has a highly dedicated man and a new Board of Trustees that offer hope to the future of our children.

Where were you on October 26, 27, 28, 1967 when the Government of the United States held the first National Conference for Mexican Americans at El Paso, Texas ?

Where were you when Burten Hackney, Commissioner of the State Dept. of Public Welfare insulted the Mexican American Mother ? You kept a tight lip while he described your Mother, wife and daughter as being domestically ignorant and inept.

And where were you while the poor of San Antonio were pleading to the State Welfare Office on Santa Rosa St. ?

Where were you when Ollie Wurzback made the statement that his run-off with Mr. John Alaniz was a result of meekins voting for meekins. The idiot doesn't know that all of us who voted for Mr. Alaniz are bonifide and proud Americans, not Mexican nationals. But your statement was "how can a team of Wurzback and Genzales going to lose ?".

The VISTA programs which have contributed to helping educate the poor and which has greatly contributed in elevating poverty conditions in Mexican American barrios has been viciously and vindictively attacked by you and the Establishment to suppress the Mexican American in his efforts to forge better conditions to improve his environment.

While you extol that millions are being spent in San Antonio to fight poverty - the reality is that statistics show we still maintain the highest rate of starvation, unskilled, uneducated, and underemployable.

With regard to your denial of discrimination at Kelly Air Force Base, the Establishment and white supremacist are not so stupid as to commit an overt act of discrimination - call it systematic, latent, exposed or what have you. The statistics prove the facts - in spite of your assiduous actions to harass and distort the investigations of the Civil Rights Commission. I question your outrageous and ulterior purpose in protecting incompetence within the Federal Government and condoning discrimination practices.

Your Congressional colleagues should welcome the opportunity for a Congressional investigation of all Federal installations to expose and correct the widespread discrimination, management patronage, and administrative practices that are inconsistent with Air Force Regulations and our democratic philosophy, especially at Kelly Air Force Base, Texas.

There is little doubt that if you displayed as much imagination and initiative in helping to correct the intolerable injustices in our society, to help overhaul outworn institutions; solutions to our many problems now in the grip of bureaucratic blight would become vulnerable to resolution at a much faster rate.

The Mexican American and Spanish speaking people are no longer satisfied with the traditional notion that we, for obscure racial, geographical or cultural reasons, were inherently unable to cope with modernization. A more critical analysis championed the view that our condition was in large part the result of conditions and a double-standard system set up by the Establishment since 1776 which was in violation and inconsistent with the adopted Constitution. This Establishment, composed of bigoted despots endorsed a policy and philosophy of subserviancy, coercion, suppression and a double standard of justice which is prevalent throughout our Country. This Establishment system regards tradition more precious than truth, and places prejudice and discrimination above humanism.

We recognize the fact that if there is to be progress against these barriers which prevent and obstruct a more functional Citizenship, we must above all things retrieve our dignity and worth as a person with a specific ethnic antecedent, possessing a positive contribution to civilization. No man can find a true expression for living, or much less think right, who is ashamed of himself or his people. A MAN IS WHAT HE IS, AND IF HE ISN'T THAT, HE ISN'T ANYTHING.

We are committed to the Cause of seeking and enhancing Justice and the ideals of Democracy for all Americans. We shall defy, challenge, expostulate and debate with any perpetrator advocating suppression of our human dignity and rights. I offer you a challenge Congressman to make your stand clear and precise. Are you for the despondent, illiterate, the ostracized and the inarticulate? We are still waiting for positive action on your part without committing fratricide. VIVA LA CAUSA !

Paul R. Torres

Paul R. Torres
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